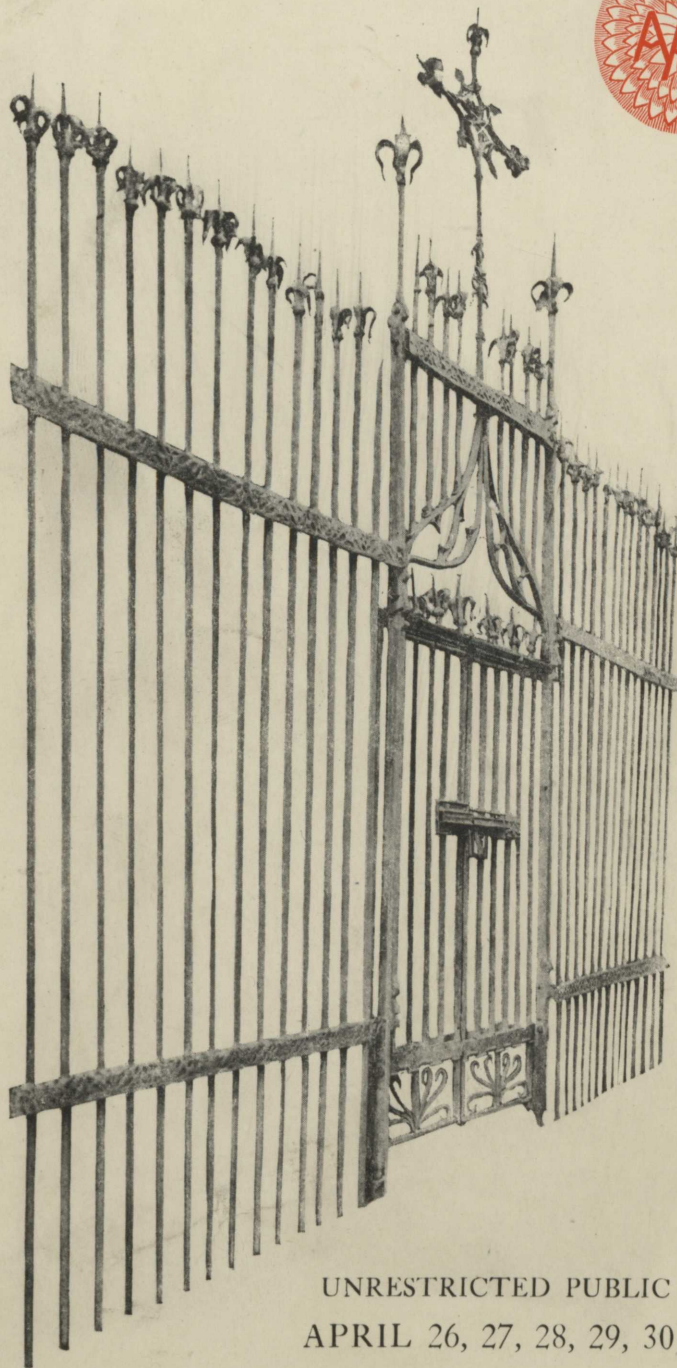
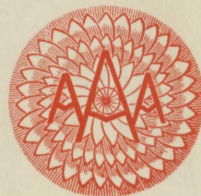


Almoneda coll

SPANISH ART TREASURES

A FOREWORD



UNRESTRICTED PUBLIC SALE
APRIL 26, 27, 28, 29, 30—1921

AT THE AMERICAN ART GALLERIES

MADISON SQUARE SOUTH
NEW YORK

FOREWORD TO
THE ALMONEDA COLLECTION
OF
SPANISH ART TREASURES

THE ENTIRE COLLECTION TO BE SOLD AT
UNRESTRICTED PUBLIC SALE

AT THE
AMERICAN ART GALLERIES

ON THE AFTERNOONS OF
APRIL 26TH, 27TH, 28TH, 29TH AND 30TH, 1921
AND EVENING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27TH

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF
THE AMERICAN ART ASSOCIATION
MADISON SQUARE SOUTH
NEW YORK CITY

THE SPANISH OWNER

As Señor Antonio Cuyas, former Commercial Delegate to the Spanish Embassy at Washington, states, the owner of the Almoneda Collection, Mr. Herbert P. Weissberger, "enjoys amongst the best official and social circles in Madrid the highest reputation and standing as an Art Connoisseur, business man and gentleman."

Mr. Weissberger has been indeed fortunate. He had in the first place a father devoted to the acquisition of treasures of the eighteenth century and his own taste impelling him towards the earlier manifestations of artistic craftsmen, he has succeeded so well in collecting the best of all periods that his and his brother's gatherings are among those which are best known and valued by the inhabitants of Madrid. Indeed, many of the objects in their collection are illustrated in the leading contemporary books dealing with Spanish art, including the many publications connected with exhibitions held in Madrid by the "Friends of Spanish Art," and "The Architecture and Crafts of Old Spain" by Professor A. Meyer.



607—SPANISH PAINTED AND CARVED LIMESTONE PANEL

Seventeenth Century

Rectangular shape, with molded borders and carved with scrolled escutcheon charged with a coat-of-arms and surmounted by a Putto's head and crossed keys. Traces of painting.

Height, 31 inches; width, 24 inches.

SPANISH ART INFLUENCES

As will be seen from the illustrated catalogue, written by Mr. Horace Townsend (copy mailed on receipt of two dollars), many of Mr. Weissberger's choicest pieces come from the collection of the Excelentísimo Marqués de Valverde, whom New York will remember as visiting here in 1916 as King Alfonso's Commissioner, in order to exhibit His Majesty's Tapestries under the auspices of the Hispanic Society. Other examples come from the great Conventual churches, and others, yet again, from such private collections as those of Don Adriano Lanuza of Madrid, President of the Banco de Crédito, and of Don Bonifacio Diaz of Burgos: Spain, until the fifteenth century, after passing under the rule, partial or absolute, of the Phœnicians, the Romans and the Visigoths, was largely dominated by the Moors, who left their indelible imprint on its art. Evidences of this may be seen in the boxes and inlaid work, as well as in the wall-tiles to be found in this collection.

The Spaniards themselves attribute to the constant wars between the Moors and the Christians their marked religiosity. Be that as it may, it is beyond all cavil that Spain in the Middle Ages was the most Catholic of European countries, as it is to-day, and that this was notably expressed in Spanish art and in the lavish decoration of the churches and cathedrals. Thus, many of the pictures here offered are religious in their subjects and the preponderance is marked of paintings of the Madonna, who was not only adored by the Spanish as the Queen of Heaven, but was regarded as the ideal of womanhood. Nevertheless, there are many pictures of later date and belonging to other schools which have been selected mainly for their decorative qualities.



ALONSO SANCHEZ COELLO

SPANISH: 1531—1588

470—*PORTRAIT OF DON CARLOS*

(Canvas)

Height, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; width, 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

HEAD of the youthful Don Carlos, son of Philip II, with fair hair, seen in three-quarter view and looking to the front. He wears a black gold-embroidered jerkin and a ruff. Dark background.

JAIME VERGOS (1459-1503) AND JAUME HUGUET
(15TH CENTURY)

520—*RETABLO AND ALTAR FRONTAL*

(Panel)

Height, 100 inches; width, 85 inches

RETABLO divided into five panels, center panel with Deposition from the cross, the undraped figure of Christ supported by the Virgin and St. John, with Mary Magdalen and another Saint behind, the Virgin with blue mantle, Mary Magdalen and the other Saint with gold brocaded robes, all with gold-rayed haloes. Rocky landscape and blue sky. On the left side above is the figure of St. Peter with tiara and holding his keys, on the right side a figure of St. John holding a book with a lamb. Below on the left side is a panel with an Annunciation, the Virgin and the angel both kneeling. On the right side is a visit of the Magi, the three kings holding vases decorated with gilt gesso work, one kneeling in adoration of the Christ seated on the lap of His Mother, who wears a red robe and blue mantle. Altar frontal below divided into five panels by pinnaced Gothic columns. Center panel painted with Christ wearing a crown of thorns with a rayed halo flanked by half-length figures of saints with gilt gesso-modeled haloes and gold backgrounds patterned in red and black with scrolls, leaves and floral medallions.



No. 520

SPANISH FURNITURE

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Spain practically ruled the world. She dominated Flanders, Spaniards ruled Sicily and Naples, a Spanish Emperor sat on the throne of Germany, while with France she was on the best of terms. Small wonder then that the tables, the chairs and the cabinets are so largely reminiscent of the cabinet-maker's art of other countries. It is, however, a noteworthy fact that while these foreign influences affected it in time, it did not stamp out the Spanish characteristics therein displayed. Señor Riano has said that "the brilliant epoch of carving belongs to the sixteenth century and was due to the great impulse received from the works of Berruguete and Felipe de Borgona." It is worthy of note that, following the examples of their monarchs, the Spanish nobles lavished color and ostentatious splendor upon their churches, while their homes were remarkable for a dignity that almost approached austerity. It is this feature of the furniture of their best period, its noble simplicity, its discreet use of carving and other ornamentation, that renders it so thoroughly at home in our modern houses. Particularly so is this the case with the tables, of which an unusual variety will be found in the Almoneda Collection: sacristy tables, refectory tables, library tables, tables with wrought-iron braces, tables with carved and tables with inlaid aprons, are here in profusion. Nor have chairs, cabinets and chests been neglected, so that the whole showing is full of interest and attraction to the increasing number of people who like beautiful things with which to adorn their rooms.

Regarding the furniture, it is perhaps enough to say that rarely, if ever, has so bountiful a showing, strictly Spanish in its origin, been brought to New York. It will be found that, like all good furniture of a good period, it will take its place without question as to the taste exercised in any room and among any surroundings. It may be mentioned in connection with the furniture that the collection is exceptionally rich in Spanish wood carvings, figures, columns and pilasters. Some of these are examples of the Plateresque style, a word derived from the Spanish *platero*, or silversmith, and many are representative of the *estofado*, or art of imitating rich stuffs in sculptured wood, the surface being first gilded then covered with paint which was scratched away to form a pattern.

A last word may be said as to the Italian carved walnut choir stall of the seventeenth century, important as regards its size, and more so in respect to its admirable craftsmanship.



939—SPANISH WALNUT TABLE

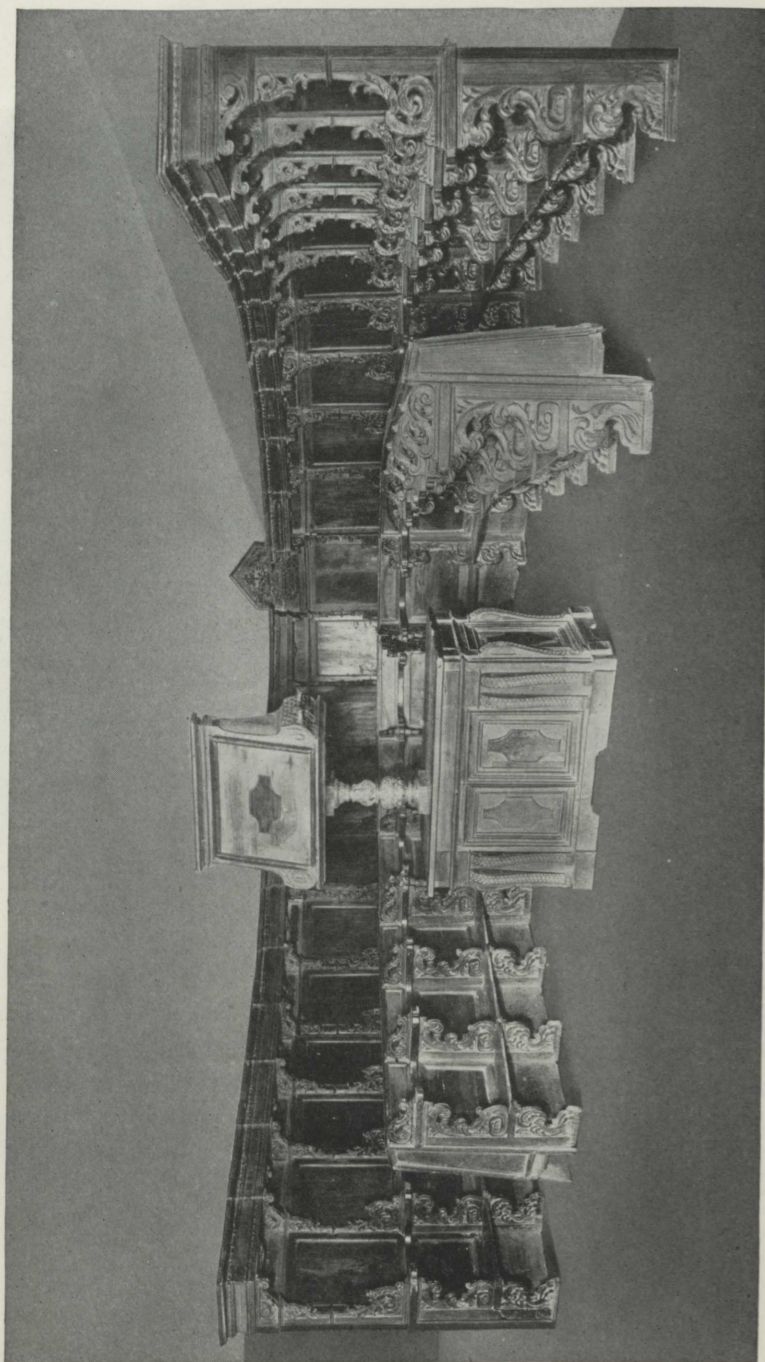
Sixteenth Century

Rectangular top with rounded angles and edge, plain apron fitted with two drawers with lozenge-shaped paneled fronts, spirally turned legs with fluted and astragalled center supports and shaped and carved cross braces, shaped and carved end rails. Wrought-iron, knopped, cylindrical longitudinal braces. Brass knobs and rosettes.

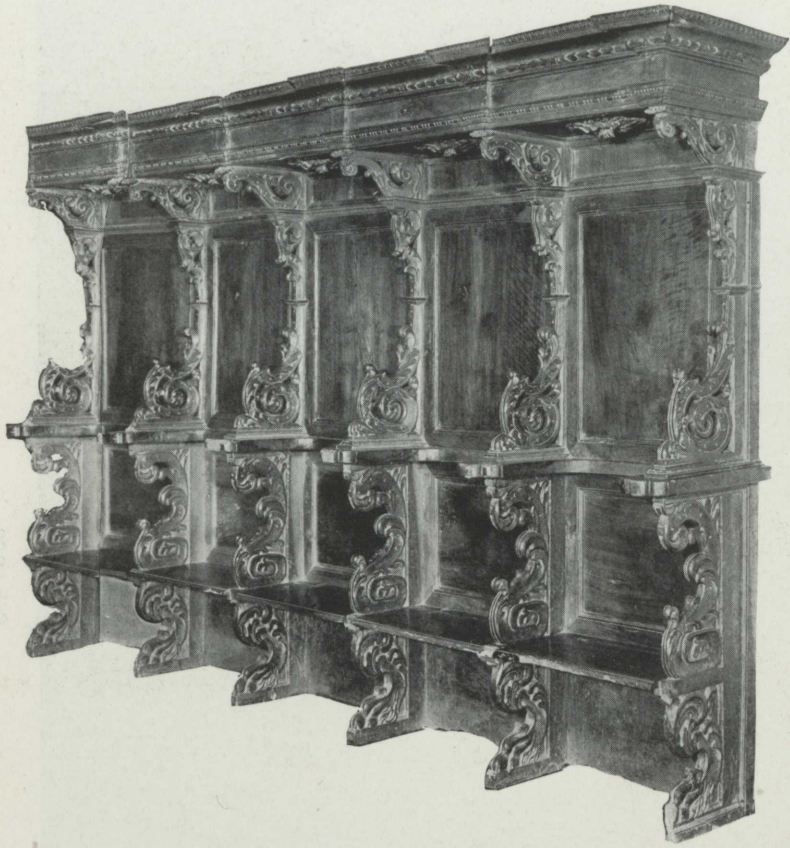
Height, 31½ inches; length, 46¾ inches; width, 30 inches.

From the collection of the Marqués de Valverde.

Semicircular, on plan to occupy the apsidal end of the church. In the center is a seat, with a pointed molded pediment above the tympanum of which is carved with a scrolled escutcheon supported by shells and carved with the arms of the Franciscan Order (two crossed arms and a cross). Below is an oval panel with carved leaf border inscribed "CHORVS" or (Choir). On either side of the central stall are ten others, each with a hinged seat, above is a broken molded projecting cornice and plain frieze carved with bands of pointed leaves and bead-and-reel ornament. The stalls are panels and divided by square pilasters ending in carved and pierced voluted brackets. The overhanging cornice is supported by carved voluted consoles and the soffits are decorated with carved oval acanthus-leaf medallions. Flat carved arms with trefoil ends and acanthus-leaf carved brackets above, carved, pierced and voluted acanthus-leaf scrolled supports, and carved and pierced acanthus-leaf legs. On either side of the central stall the frieze is inscribed in Roman characters: "OPERE AC INDVS PRIS GABRIELLIS DE RVBEIS * A BVXETO GVARDIANI ANNO DÑI MDCLXXXIII."



No. 968



968—ITALIAN WALNUT CHOIR

Seventeenth Century

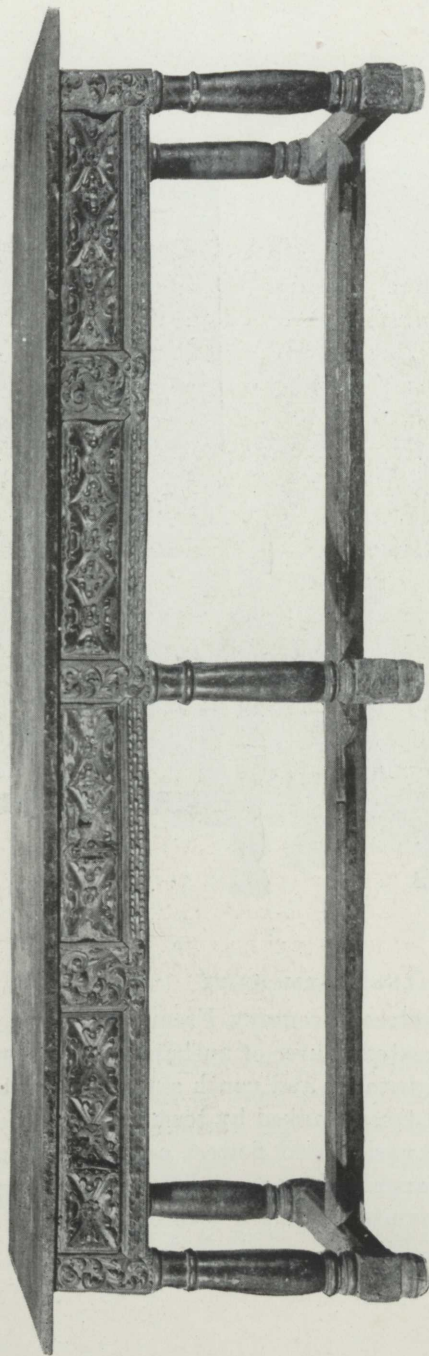
Inner series of twelve stalls, also semicircular, on plan with hinged seats and flat curved arms with carved, voluted arms above, carved and pierced acanthus-leaf supports and acanthus-leaf carved scrolled legs with paw feet. Head rail sloping inward and paneled backs with falling rectangular book receptacles in center.

Height of back stalls, 7 feet 9 inches; height of inner stalls, 4 feet 1 inch.



863—PAIR OF FRENCH WALNUT ARMCHAIRS *Seventeenth Century*

Seats and backs in sixteenth century French tapestry woven in designs, the backs of seated figures of husband and wife with pond and formal garden in distance and youth and maiden with formal garden, buildings and trees, flanked by terminal caryatid figures, the seats of vases of varicolored flowers on light grounds with half-figures below, drapery festoons and figures holding torches above and baskets of fruits. Secured with brass-headed nails.

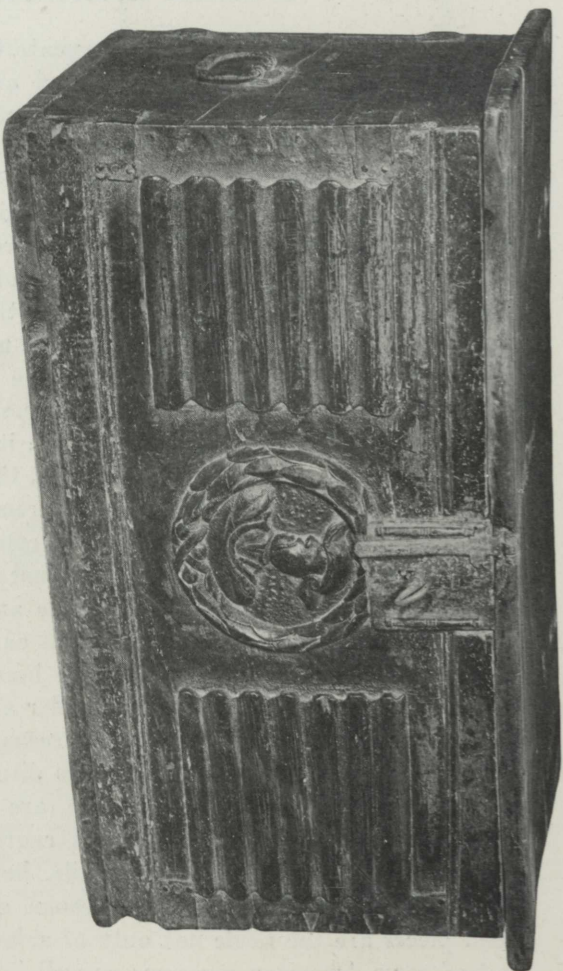


956—CASTILIAN WALNUT CONVENT LIBRARY TABLE

Sixteenth Century

Rectangular top with straight edge. Apron carved with scrolled acanthus leaves and notched bands and fitted with four drawers with leaf medallion carved fronts. Turned columnar legs with flat molded rails and longitudinal stretcher. Wrought-iron pear-shaped drop handles.

Height, 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; length, 116 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; width, 29 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches.



914—BURGOS WALNUT BRIDAL ARCON, OR CHEST

Fifteenth Century

Rectangular hinged lid with straight edge; front carved with bust portrait of knight in casque and armor within a laurel wreath, flanked by primitive horizontal linen-fold panels. Wrought-iron carrying handles, lock plate, hasp and angle straps.

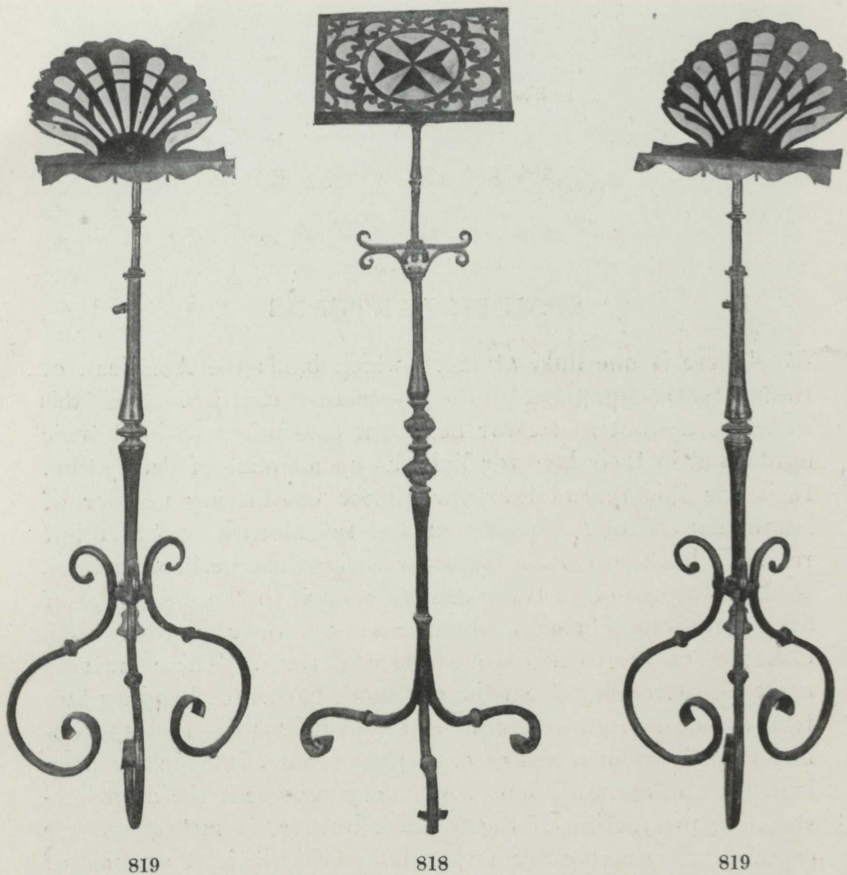
Height, 20 inches; length, 36 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; width, 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Note: This chest came from the house of Don Bonifacio Díez Montero, Member of the "Audencia de Burgos." Burgos is the town made famous by the Spanish Troubadour, El Cid Campeador.

SPANISH IRONWORK

The iron mines of Spain, the greatest metalliferous country of ancient Europe, were operated as early as the sixth century B.C. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Peninsula is extremely rich in decorative ironwork forged during the Middle Ages. There seemed to be something about the intractable metal which appealed to the indomitable temper of the people, and artists of the highest rank worked in it. It was, appropriately enough, in Northern Catalonia that the metal was smelted in a distinctly new fashion, the open hearth being abandoned for a closed forerunner of the modern blast furnace. To-day, in Pittsburgh, a peculiarly fine iron is produced by what is still known as the "Catalan process."

Outside of Spain, it has been said, it is difficult to study the achievements of the Spanish smiths, the size and weight of the gates and screens rendering their removal practically impossible. But modern energy has overcome this difficulty, and some of these large pieces, as, for instance, the Catalonian *reja*, or cloister gate, which was made and erected in the old church from which it was purchased as early as the fourteenth century (see cover illustration), have been brought across the ocean in their entirety. Of such smaller articles as park-gates, brackets, torchères, and irons and screens there are many here catalogued, while special attention is directed to the lecterns, which, as pieces of church furniture, are to-day well-nigh unprocurable. There is also a most extraordinary assemblage of Gothic wrought-iron hardware, nails, boxes, locks, keys and pierced bands. These have now become exceedingly rare, and such pieces are the pride not only of a few Spanish collectors, but of some American museums as well.



818—ANDALUSIAN WROUGHT-IRON LECTERN *Seventeenth Century*

Rectangular sloping back pierced with scrolls and Maltese cross, cylindrical knopped stem with applied bossed quatrefoil and scrolled horizontal arm. Tripod stand of three voluted knopped iron-rod legs with flattened voluted feet.

Height, 63 inches.

819—PAIR OF ANDALUSIAN WROUGHT-IRON LECTERNS

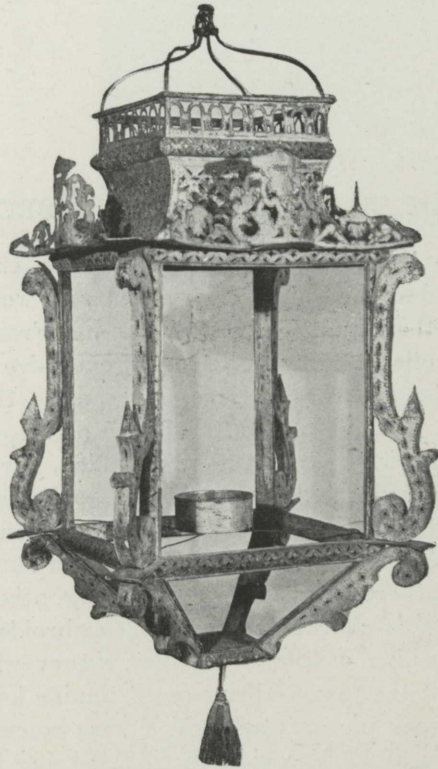
Seventeenth Century

Sloping reading desks, pierced with fans, cylindrical knopped, vase-shaped stems. On tripod stands of three scrolled voluted iron-rod legs.

Heights, 59 inches.

SPANISH LANTERNS

There is one link, at least, which binds the American of to-day to the Spaniard of the seventeenth century. One finds it in the mutual desire for beautiful containers to hold their lights and in their love for light as an adjunct of decoration. It is for this reason that the almost bewildering number of lamps and lanterns, chiefly of the seventeenth century, but reaching back to Gothic days for their constructional details, is likely to prove something of a revelation to those desirous of brightening their rooms, their halls or their gardens with examples of the work of old-time craftsmen. These lanterns are of sizes varying from the enormous cathedral hanging lantern of nearly four feet and a half in height to the small domestic lanterns of a size of only eight inches, and include pole, hanging and standing lanterns. They represent the most outstanding production of the Spanish workers in metal, and are especially noticeable from the skill with which the union of metal and glass is carried out. Especially interesting are those with projecting angles, in some cases having finials of wrought-iron lilies in token of their forming a part of the decoration of chapels dedicated to the Virgin, whose Spanish symbol so frequently was the Lily of the Annunciation.



924—TOLEDAN WROUGHT-IRON CATHEDRAL LANTERN

Late Sixteenth Century

Rectangular shape with pierced voluted brackets at the angles, pierced framework, cresting pierced as Virgin's crown; rectangular top pierced with arcading and apron with pierced voluted brackets at angles.

Height, 52 inches; width, 27 inches.

SPANISH EMBROIDERIES AND BROCADES

Spain has always been noted for its embroideries and brocades, some of them worked and woven in the country, others imported from Italy and France, and of these the collection has an unusually extensive gathering.

In the churches, palace, and homes throughout Spain there is evidence of that love and appreciation of embroideries and brocades, of which, for centuries Spain has been noted, some of these worked and woven in Spain itself, others imported from Italy and France.

Of these objects, the collection has an unusually extensive gathering, and includes among other masterpieces of this character a Spanish embroidered velvet church cushion of the Sixteenth Century which is an example of the famous *Peinture d'Aiguille* known to us as needlework pictures and which were executed in the Monastery of El Escorial, the latter being the palace built by King Philip II, and the burial place of succeeding Spanish Kings.



390—FRENCH NEEDLEWORK PANEL

Worked, in colored wools and in cross stitch, with a fountain in the center, decorated with a cherub and supported by two unicorns, on a dark ground patterned, in colors, with leaves, fruits, flowers and birds.

Height, 2 feet 7 inches; width, 6 feet 7½ inches.

Sixteenth Century

Rectangular shape. Crimson velvet, embroidered, in colored silks and gold and silver thread, with an oval scrolled medallion occupied by the figure of the Virgin, woven in tapestry and embroidered, in red robe and blue mantle, standing upon a crescent and clouds and supported by four angels on clouds. Above her are the half-length figures of God the Father and Son, holding a crown over her head, with the Spiritus Sanctus in the form of a dove hovering above. This medallion is on a ground *semé* with embroidered quatrefoils and is surrounded by six emblems of the Virgin, each with an inscription on a scrolled label below. In the upper left-hand corner is a portrait, below it a fountain and below that again an open sepulchre. In the upper right-hand corner is a tower, below that a pedestal, and below that again a city gate with domed tower and pinnacles. Border of scrolled strapwork set with jewels in raised silver-gilt mounts set in embroidered quatrefoils. Reverse side embroidered in gold thread with circular starred medallion enclosing scrolls and the Virgin's crown and with scrolled quatrefoils at angles.

Length, 2 feet; width, 1 foot 8½ inches.

From the collection of the Marqués de Valverde.

Note: This cushion is an example of the famous *peinture d'aiguille*, known to us as Needlework pictures. They were worked in the Monastery of El Escorial, the latter being the Palace built by King Philip II and the burial place of succeeding Spanish kings.



No. 402

942—SILVERWOVEN FRENCH TAPESTRY

Sixteenth Century

"Assault of Rhodes." In the foreground are two warriors in plumed helmets, one with spear and buckler, and one with a sword. Nearby is a boat, the gunwales hung with shields, and with another warrior. In the distance are the towers of Rhodes and the harbor, with the famous Colossus. Above is an escutcheon, mantled with standards and spears, surmounted by a crown and charged with the arms of the Marshal d'Effet.

Height, 9 feet 2 inches; width, 5 feet 1 inch.



No. 942

COMPOSITION, PRESSWORK
AND BINDING BY



SPANISH ART TREASURES



THE AMERICAN ART ASSOCIATION

MADISON SQUARE SOUTH

NEW YORK CITY

1921